

CHIEF JUSTICE PRESENTS "STATE OF JUDICIARY" TO LEGISLATURE

Chief Justice Ron George presented his annual ["State of the Judiciary" address](#) Tuesday to a joint convocation of the California Legislature. In his address, the chief warned that disproportionate cuts in the judiciary's budget will have a profound negative effect on access to justice in the state, essentially closing the courthouse doors to poor families and children, as well as civil litigants.

"Every type of civil and family law case will be affected negatively if budget cuts dig deeper into the heart of our justice system," George said, citing specific examples of the impact budget cuts are already having in specific courts and programs.

Following the Chief's address, the Judicial Council sponsored a reception for lawmakers and staff in the Capitol basement. The event was well-attended by members of the Council and guests, as well as Members of the Senate and legislative staff. However, Assembly Members were prevented from participating due to the extended debate over resolutions concerning the war in.

ASSEMBLY DEBATES FOR HOURS ON IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

After a six-hour debate in the Democratic Caucus and additional emotional debate on the floor, the Assembly Tuesday evening unanimously adopted a resolution ([HR 21](#) – [Nunez](#)) supporting U.S. troops involved in the war in Iraq, but not the war effort itself or President George W. Bush.

Prior to passing the resolution on a voice vote, after a roll-call vote added 74 co-authors to the measure (three members were absent, and three Republicans refused to sign on), the Assembly had rejected a resolution duplicating the one passed by Congress the week before, as well as two Republican attempts to amend HR 21 itself. The final compromise came when the authors agreed to add the words "support for our troops" to a sentence expressing the house's desire for a quick end to hostilities and the safe return of U.S. servicemen and servicewomen. News accounts of the debate are included in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#), [Sacramento Bee](#), and [Los Angeles Times](#).

In contrast, the Senate passed its own resolution ([SR 15](#) – [Burton](#)) supporting U.S. forces in Iraq on a 38-0 vote Thursday, with essentially no discord or fanfare. Like the Assembly resolution, the Senate version does not explicitly support either the president or the U.S. mission in Iraq.

RECALL DAVIS CAMPAIGN PETITION CLEARED

Secretary of State [Kevin Shelley](#) Tuesday cleared the way for proponents of a recall of Governor Gray Davis to begin their campaign, by approving the legal format for the recall petitions. Recall supporters would have to collect at least 897,158 valid signatures of registered voters by September 2, 2003, to qualify for the ballot. Shelley had rejected earlier versions of the petition.

Each of California's past five governors -- Pete Wilson, George Deukmejian, Jerry Brown, Ronald Reagan and Pat Brown -- faced recall attempts, none of which obtained the signatures necessary to qualify for the ballot. The "Recall Davis" campaign proposes to seek to collect the bulk of its signatures through online petitions.

The SOS office must maintain a running count of the valid signatures. Once/if it determines that a sufficient number have been collected, the Lieutenant Governor must call a recall election within 60-80 days of the certification date, unless the recall can be consolidated with a regularly scheduled election within 180 days of that date. The next regularly scheduled election is the March 2004 primary.

LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

- Month of April: Policy committees will continue to hear bills, and several committees -- in addition to their regular bill load -- will be holding "informational" hearings on various topics pertaining to the committee's jurisdiction.
- April 10 - April 20: Legislature's Spring Recess.
- May 2: Last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house.
- May 9: Last day for policy committees to hear and report non-fiscal bills introduced in their house to the floor.